

"This is not just a struggle for freedom, but a struggle for life. And we have to realize that."



UNITED WE STOOD

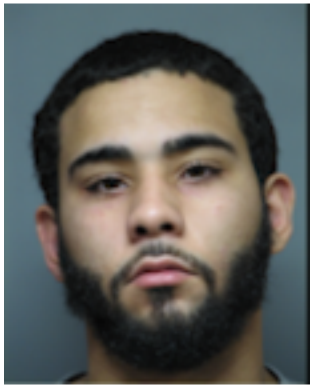
Writings and Analysis from the Vaughn 17

compiled and edited by Coalition to Free the Vaughn 17

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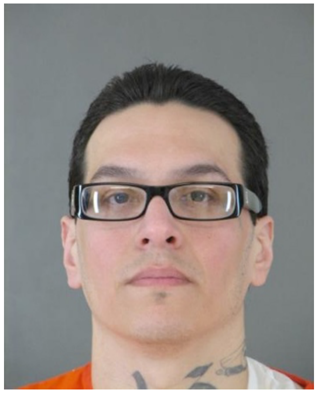


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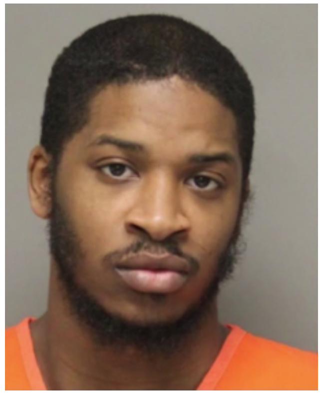


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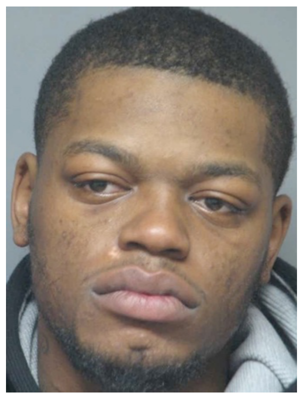
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UNITED WE STOOD

WRITINGS AND ANALYSIS FROM THE VAUGHN 17

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anding of one another for communication. The more we communicate with one another, the better we understand one another.

The more we understand one another, the better the chances are of us growing to love one another. The more we grow to love one another, the better the chances are of us unifying with one another. The more we unify with one another, the better the chances are of us getting something effective done with one another. The more we get done with one another, the better the progression will be that we made with one another. Last but not least, the better the progression we make with one another, the faster and stronger the change will be. Despite our ethnic backgrounds and the frivolous differences of us all, there is no ingredient stronger than love. With that said, as a people, I ask that we come together, turn in the hate for love, and challenge our oppressors with numbers that they never seen before! At the end of the day, we all share a purpose and common goal which is equality, freedom, and justice for all. And what's a better strategy to accomplish our goals than by coming together? Exactly, there is none.

Malcolm X said: "There's strength in numbers." The time is now my fellow comrades. Remain militant! Stay motivated! Be inspired! Love more! And most importantly, stay woke! All power to the people!

\- Luis

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THE IMPORTANCE OF LOVE IN THE STRUGGLE



“We need to love each other on purpose.” - Assata Shakur

Dear Comrades,

For those who don’t know, the above quote is the words of the great revolutionary and former Black Panther Assata Shakur. My reason for sharing this quote is to put emphasis on the importance that we need to learn to love rather than hate each other. Not only do we need to learn how to love each other like Assata said, but we also need to learn how to love each other for the sake of creating permanent change. If you think about it, who even taught us to hate each other in the first place?

In my opinion, I believe that hatred is learned in the household and it intensifies in time through ignorance and practice. As a people, if we want change, then we have to replace the hatred with love and the misunderst-

PREFACE

On February 1, 2017, prisoners in C-building at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center in Delaware took control of the building and held guards hostage in an uprising that lasted over 18 hours. That morning, several prisoners had put on masks and rushed the guards who were letting them back into the building from yard, while another prisoner ensured that the counselor on duty was kept safe and held off a CERT team that sought to retake the building.

The prisoners leading the uprising called the media and released a list of demands; the prison eventually retook the building by breaching one of its walls with a backhoe. One prison guard, Steven Floyd, was killed by prisoners during the uprising.

The Vaughn 17 are seventeen of the eighteen prisoners who were subsequently indicted on charges including multiple counts of murder, kidnapping, assaulting an officer, and conspiracy, by the state of Delaware. The eighteenth person charged, Royal “Diamond” Downs, a notorious Black Guerrilla Family leader, turned state’s witness and provided much of the State’s case against the prisoners.

Despite that, the indicted prisoners, most of whom did not know or deal with each other prior to the uprising, organized their own defense and almost completely beat the State’s case at trial. Dwayne Staats and Jarreau “Ruk” Ayers represented themselves at court and took responsibility for their part in planning the uprising and with assisting with keeping everyone safe during the takeover itself, respectively. Both were already serving life sentences.

The other prisoners in the first two trials — Deric Forney, Kevin Berry, Abednego Baynes, John Bramble, and Obadiah Miller — were acquitted in court of all charges (the last two had a hung jury on charges of assaulting an officer, which were later dropped). Roman Shankaras, who

had helped organize nonviolent protests prior to the uprising and whom the State hoped to frame as the “mastermind” behind the prison takeover, was tried separately and acquitted on all charges. The State was forced to drop the remaining charges against the rest of the defendants.

The shared mission of the Vaughn 17 is to disrupt, dismantle and destroy the prison industrial complex. Many of the V17 are revolutionaries or insurrectionaries taking up the incendiary and blood-soaked tradition of figures like Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey, and George Jackson. The rest stuck together when indicted and made enormous sacrifices in the process.

Prisoners were physically tortured following the uprising and experienced extreme pressure from the state to cooperate. After Delaware failed to beat the collective in court, most of the Vaughn 17 were shipped to Pennsylvania, where the state could continue to keep them in solitary indefinitely with no way out. They have now all been in solitary for at least four consecutive years (most for much longer).

We support the Vaughn 17 because as aspiring insurrectionaries, we are inspired by their physical struggle against prison and systemic oppression and by their unflinching refusal to cooperate with the State. The writings in this zine come from captive revolutionaries whose analysis, experience, and abilities extend far beyond what most radicals on the outside have dared to explore. Struggles out here against authority have a lot to learn from prisoners’ experiences on the inside. Bringing these two very different insurrectionary currents together has the potential to enrich us all in unimaginable ways, open up our vision, threaten the State, and bring us closer to collective liberation.

Throughout the trial, we lost Kelly Gibbs to alleged suicide. Most of them are stranding all over PA, one is now in VA, and one is in the state of Illinois. To this day, they remained strong and united and have the most respect for all of them. I witnessed the trial first hand, and honestly, they brought me back from almost retiring from activism. After the Baltimore uprising, I was done with the so-called social Justice agenda. Still, these guys showed me that there is something more important out there, which is when I picked aside. Prison liberation is not easy, but I am proud to say: I am on the freedom side – until these gates fall and each wall is demolished and abolition. Power to the People.

~Fariha

A MESSAGE FROM AN OUTSIDE SUPPORTER

Pick your side: If liberation is not your goal, then what is? I was asked to engage with my personal thoughts on a Zine. We get picky with picking a topic, who is the audience. So I picked mine! Which side are you on, my people, which side are you on? The lyrical notes of this liberating song wandered in my memory. Usually, the response is we're on the freedom side. We sang these words collectively as we as outside supporters/activists represented the #Vaughn17 #FAM and all other prison liberators from behind the cold stone walls, as we participated in direct action for #BlackAugust. Our Comrades Dwayne Staats, Jarreau Ayers inspired us to manifest the idea. We loudly spoke into our mics written by them as orange jumpsuits covered our bodies. In particular, I realized that outside supporters fall into the trap of liberal agendas throughout these past years, romanticize over what prison support looks like, and arguing over agendas and finally losing track of what should be our ultimate goal. Here is a question I thought out into the universe: If you are not here to unlock those gates, then why are you here? I understand that some of you engage and indulge in philosophical discussions of what abolition or liberation looks like, and those are all valid and needed. But I am tired. I am sitting here thinking, damn, how long have people used the words change does not come overnight. I look at my comrades on the outside; I can count them on my fingers.

I sometimes wonder about white kids complaining about capacity. I want to introduce them to my comrades. Do they know about the dope prison organizer who went on a 7 day hunger strike to fight for/alongside his comrades inside the belly of PA's cages? The question of capacity was an easy one for some of my comrades, better known as the #Vaughn17. They all accused of prison uprising in Delaware's James T. Vaughn Prison.

WAR ON PRISONERS AND THE BIRTH OF THE VAUGHN 17



BY ROMAN SHANKARAS, IN CONVERSATION WITH THE EDITOR

From the youth center on up, the detention centers when I was a juvenile, to me it was natural to stand up against these prison staff and guards for the things that they was doing. The type of control they had, the power they had, I never believed in it since I was young. I never believed in it, I never fell for it, their level of authority; it never meant nothing to me at all.

Other people in jail wasn't thinking about it like that, but they still expressed anger. At first I never really organized nothing, I just expressed it — so it was just all over the place but at the end of the day, how I looked at this shit was you upset, I'm upset, let's do something about it. And that's how this shit was, from the inception of my anger towards this system, that's how it was always projected. Just a physical thing mostly, just lashing out; we're pretty much emulating what they're doing to us.

They're hitting us, they're physically abusive to children, we get them back the same way. And you know it develops as you go on and become an adult and now you're in the penitentiary.

It was people in prison that shared that state of mind, but it didn't manifest physically. So I used to hear that, then compared that to people that was actually doing it, and they wasn't saying anything about it. They didn't know anything about it, they just knew how to articulate it physically. So I pretty much found a balance between the two.

When I started to read other peoples' stories and shit — that person went through the same thing as I did, damn I can relate, I'm doing the same shit this person did in the '70s or the '60s. At that point I began to really get into this shit, really study it, understand it, and get what the fuck I was actually against. Before, I had a surface-level education against my enemy, and now I'm studying this shit, I'm studying what the fuck is going on — the prison industrial complex; I'm running the parallels to how it's affecting community and how it's going back, and now I'm getting more motivated — to say what's the solution, how will I make an impact?

George Jackson, Franz Fanon, James Yaki Sayles — Yaki Sayles did about 33 years before he was released and died a couple years later of cancer. He wrote a book on his meditations on Franz Fanon. And that changed a lot. That motivated a lot of my observations, as well as George Jackson. We called it the blueprint because it was a compilation of writings and analysis of both the communities and the prisons and their core relations. That was essential for me.

What was it about C-building that made the conditions right for what happened there? My personal opinion is — a lot. The compound was transitioning, so they took another whole building that was medium/max

And to our parents, please stop disrespecting our children's mental and emotional strength to lead or understand their purpose...it's costing them their lives and our people their future!!!

Always remember
If it's right
Then it's legal cause the power
Is the people's!

- Ruk

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Comrades, the need for us to willingly and continually produce strong Black intellectual rebellious youth to lead us, now and always, will be our greatest responsibility! Not only to guarantee our future, but to guarantee the existence of our core principles within our movements, to not simply seek reform, but the burning down and complete change of a system that's killing people of oppression in more ways than I can articulate!

We have to begin by sharpening their natural weapons at birth. Preparing them for the moment when they will be called upon to unleash those weapons on our enemy!!! I'm not talking simply guns or rage! I'm talking about their hearts, their minds! Rebellious youthful revolutionary courage, combined with intellectualism!

To the youth: I'm speaking directly to you when I say… I'm speaking to you from the mind & heart of what could have been and should have been a leader for our people. Had I been molded in the likeness of our comrades of the past, completely conscious of our people's fight and my purpose in life. There's no limit to what I could have achieved for the collective!!!!

Never forget, the enormity of the obstacles you will face in your lifetime will be deemed minute, when measured in comparison to your inner strength, greatness and determination to achieve your objective in life of standing firmly on the right side of the oppressed! This is an intrinsic part of your character! Stand in that truth, your truth, and don't allow weak leadership or moments of difficulty to cause you to bend, break or deviate from your path! Stay strong! Stay focused! Stay you!

security (as C-building was) and turned it into a compound (minimum security status). Everybody who had the points to be freshly released from the maximum security housing unit, these guys were now together. Just by happenstance, that's what went on.

It started off with surface-level issues: this amount of people allowed in the showers, so they only have a certain amount of showers; it was pretty much impossible for everyone who needed a shower to get one. The other thing was they was taking the recreation time and we was losing 45 minutes to an hour at a time because the guards took their time to open up the doors and let people out for recreation. The stuff I believed we was entitled to was recreation, visitation (the people who transport you there wasn't showing up on time, so you'd show up to your visit 10 minutes late and they're not giving you no extra time. Sometimes families drive hours…) so there was a bunch of little things that was going on and compiled to a point where they began to get addressed.

The nonviolent protests — there was a sit-in in the chow hall (21 of us the first time); what that did was shut down the prison. There was a couple of big names in the chow hall, with a reputation of getting physically violent, so when they saw these particular people — whose track record shows that these situations end violently — their response was over 18 men suited up (what they call the goon squad, CERT), dogs, guns, to respond to a peaceful protest. They come to the door, they ask what's going on, at lot of people hesitate — I went up to the door, I spoke to them. They was putting up false memos about you can't use the bathroom while you're at school — weak shit. The deputy warden came and he said he never signed off on any of those memos. The whole time this staff lieutenant was writing up these memos, fabricating these signatures. We would never have known this shit if these steps weren't taken. And of course naturally everyone thought it was wrong. But this shit wouldn't have came out the way it did.

The non-violent thing, if you get the right numbers and you fracture them economically in prison — what I mean is, nobody works, nobody cleans, nobody serves the chow, you begin to fuck the whole structure up. You don't physically need to shed anybody's blood, but if you have enough, and it's organized, and the people have the discipline to hold out, that shit can be just as effective — in some cases more — than you being an isolated incident doing something physically to the cops.

But the people (inmates, prisoners) don't begin to believe — they begin to lose confidence. So now in order to compensate for that lack of confidence, you have to have a concentrated, but not too many, people — ten people can make a deeper impact than a thousand peaceful protesters. Just a small amount of people that was willing to make the sacrifice can make a deeper impact than half the population doing a peaceful strike.

They fixed the problems — rec is on time, more time to eat; it worked for the minutia. The most serious problems, where there was no programming, you're barred from education because of your status, these things are not addressed. In a peaceful protest, you don't have enough people to consistently address these problems. So a deeper action has to take place.

If you had a chart of the prison population, you got the majority, the minority, and the exception. At this point the exception took action.

You had other people who tried to run interference, people who encouraged; at the end of the day, it was sad. You gotta figure, if this never happened since the inception of when this prison was created, how come nobody ever felt this way and took action on it before? And they say the generation before my generation was more aggressive and more militant. There was more isolated incidents — but there's a difference between the

ment and humbling awe upon the vanguard parties of the past! Whether it's the maroon slave liberation of the 1800's that led to the founding of Haiti, Comrade Nat Turner who led an unforgiving vanguard from plantation to plantation encouraging in the minds of enslaved people the strength to be willing to risk their lives for their individual freedom and the freedom of others through physical liberation! Allowing for that strength to become an intrinsic characteristic of generational youth to follow, as it was followed proactively by comrades George and Johnathan Jackson, who chose to seek reparations & liberation for those held captive, oppressed and dehumanized within the confines of a modern day plantation.

Our youth crave and seek to follow leadership in the likeness of the rebellious revolutionary spirit delivered by Chairman Fred Hampton and Malcolm X, who both spoke directly to the rebellious spirit of the youth; while other leaders spoke with passivity and reformism that a generation of youthful revolutionary thinkers couldn't relate to!

What I would say to those parents & leaders: In your attempt to protect the optimistic ideal mind of our youth, have you ever stopped to ask yourself why & when? Did we stop believing as a people that we could raise and encourage the resistance of warrior kings / warrior queens? Youthful leaders raised completely conscious of the reality our people face, their enemy and the cause and purpose they should live their lives with.

If I recall correctly, this is the same conscious reality that produced comrades such as Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglas along with thousands of other intellectual warriors who led us forward in the past! We can't continue to allow this internally oppressive disease to suppress the great youthful leadership of the next generation and generations to follow!

To be clear my position is not to question anyone's ability to parent, nor the leadership in their household! I simply want to provoke thought that ignites action that may ultimately cause some form of impactful generational change upon the self-esteem of our people — people of oppression! So while I empathize and understand the feeling as a parent and those in a position of leadership to attempt to protect the optimistic ideal mind of our youth, I ask you to look around! Truthfully & honestly, and acknowledge that our children are being treated like adults regardless if we want them to be or not!!!!

Shackled by invisible slave chains of probation as early as the age of 10 years old! Preyed upon by a system whose sole intent is to hunt down our future leaders at birth! Hold them captive in modern day plantations as youth, until mentally & emotionally their growth has stagnated to the point where before they reach puberty they've been psychologically programmed to be fed into this capitalist, racist conveyor belt known as recidivism! Ultimately sentenced to death by incarceration!

This is where I believe that internally oppressive disease affects the disconnect between leadership & our youth! We have to be willing to acknowledge a truth! We're losing the hearts, minds, respect and trust of our revolutionary & rebellious youth, as it relates to being leaders & revolutionary examples they are willing to follow! While intellectualism will always be respected, our youth, like the youth of the past, will not follow passive reformist intellectuals while they sit and watch people their age systematically, psychologically and physically attacked by this enemy you want to sit at the table and politic with!

One thing that has always been a foundational pillar for the youth of generations past, to use as a catalyst during stagnant moments in seeking changes and liberation, was their ability to look back with acknowledg-

collective and doing it on your own. An isolated incident can easily be hushed away and forgotten about, and it's extremely limited. They can suffocate the measures you take real fast, cause you're by yourself.

What I believe happened at C-Building is a particular group of people got fed up. They was willing to make the sacrifice, to take that action, and attack the source. All the other shit was shallow. It meant something, but it was like a shallow gratification.

I believe the Vaughn 17 is symbolic for a nuance of freedom, for a nuance of revolution, a nuance of sacrifice. It was symbolic for a degree of strength. I believe it represented a beginning. Even if nothing happens for the next 30 years, when the right time comes again, when the conditions are ripe for it to happen again. Which is going to happen, because this machine constantly sophisticates, and if the people don't match that sophistication, they get left behind. But if you wanna continue to match it, that means you gotta continue to address it. Not just with words.

I believe it's a birth of a movement in a sense, that even if left dormant for a half a century can still reoccur. Better, and capitalize off the mistakes that the first group made. It depends on the people that's involved and how serious they wanna go about it. But I think it's encouraging at the end of the day. At the minimum, it's encouraging, for the next group of people that can see.

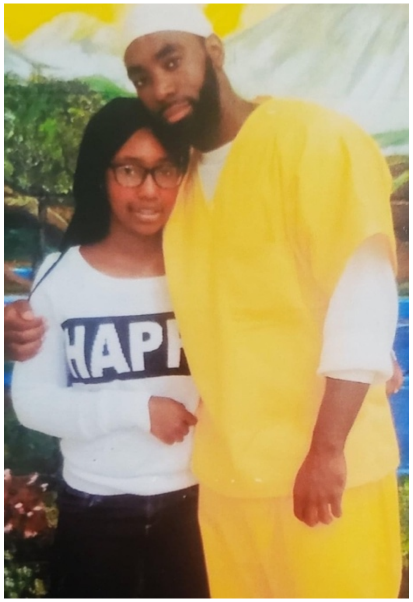
UNITED WE STOOD



Sometimes in life we have to unite with individuals or groups that we don't get along with just to achieve our goals of building upon what's ahead. The Vaughn 17 set a baseline goal to unify. A goal to build unity behind these walls. We had to remember what's important and define our principles and understand who we are fighting against and who we are truly fighting for. Not just for ourselves, but for the oppressed people in this world.

The call for change drew substance from the realities we were living with. It all emerged with a thought from a comrade and ended with actions from people who were hungry. Hungry for liberation. Here were men who were not just sacrificing their freedom, but their lives, just to bring awareness where it had been declined for so long. It is necessary to fight for human

RAISING REVOLUTIONARIES



Salutes Comrades,

My hope is that this platform offers an opportunity for me to present this communique on what I believe to be an internal oppressive disease. A disease inflicted upon our people through the psychological trauma suffered through generational systematic racism and oppression, a disease that causes our people to suffer as it relates to the disconnect between us and our youth!

My belief is that the core function or effect of this disease was to cripple our future leadership by infecting us with this internally oppressive, diseased mindframe that causes us to suppress the rebellious revolutionary spirit of our children from birth! Whether consciously or subconsciously causing us to perpetuate the wrapping of chains around the minds, emotional growth and rebellious spirit of our youth!

merely pulled out. They are dug out by the roots. In this case, the roots of this nation are the constitution. Any school of thought that breaks a person down into a fraction of a whole is broken. Nothing pure will ever develop while it's being replanted into this garden. We have to rewrite the constitution so that it unifies & brings equality to all of us. We need a new garden. We must take away their choice in the matter.

Sacrifice. One word that can have the weight of the world in it. Until we're ready to sacrifice everything, including our lives to bring a change, a better world for our children, nothing will change in permanence. Advocacy, protesting, & demonstrating brings an elucidation to something that is purposely kept in the shadows. But they are just a STEP towards change. We must dig out the weeds. What will it take for you to be ready to sacrifice for the future?

- Capo

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dignity even if suffering or maltreatment is ahead. We do it for a worthy cause. And because of that, I now have a feeling of self-respect that, no matter what, will always be there despite any of my life struggles.

One of the most beautiful things that ever happened in my life was when I witnessed 17 men (the Vaughn 17) stand firmly together against a system that attempted to bring the death penalty back to a state (Delaware) that had abolished it years prior to February 1, 2017, and to no avail; the system lost as the 17 men stood as one.

Prisoners are exploited, suppressed, and oppressed. We are subjected to a system that maintains the reality of psychological and physical terror to keep us afraid and in check while they maintain their power. Demoralization is their top priority. Whenever they see some kind of unity within us, we become a threat to them. Power is frightening, so they try to destroy any possibility of resistance. They use certain tactics to try to prevent it, such as using people to infiltrate the ranks, which is their best tactic dating back to the Black Panther Party, even back to slavery. We have to work hard to fight this unjust system. Integrating the people is a "must".

We have to show our willpower and sometimes our physical strength when need be. Malcolm X once said, "Historically, revolutions are bloody. They never had a bloodless revolution or a nonviolent revolution. It don't even happen in Hollywood. Revolutions overturn systems. Revolutions destroy systems. Revolutions are bloody." This is not just a struggle for freedom, but a struggle for life. And we have to realize that.

Having the privilege of being a part of something so powerful with my comrades was beauty in itself. And it's only because of the committed work of rebellious prisoners and the outside supporters who stand with us that this world knows what transpires inside these prisons. Knowing

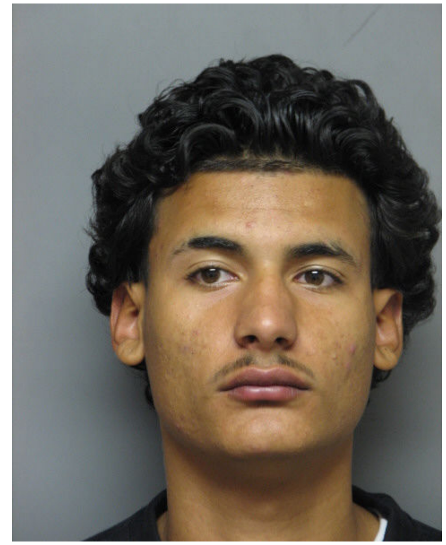
that we have a line of communication with people who will fight with us, and for us, prisons tend to be cautious at times.

February 1, 2021 marked the four-year anniversary of the James T. Vaughn Uprising. When I sit here today and think back to February 1, 2017, it wasn't the outcome of the act, but the moment of action itself that spoke the loudest for me. A time when a brotherhood was bound for a cause. That brotherhood went beyond the 19 hours inside of C-Building. We moved in solidarity throughout it all, even after all the false charges which were brought upon us. Unity is important. Especially at this time, with so much going on in the world. Despite any dislikes of any kind, we have to come together to achieve our goal. Without it we can't win. I want to thank the men who stood up and fought when the time came. And not forgotten, I have to thank the women who were at the sides of me and my comrades throughout this whole battle. I sincerely appreciate you all.

- Smoke

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SACRIFICE



As long as the people fighting fascism are anti-violent as a whole, fascism will always win. I'm a firm believer that revolution is born in bloodshed. You can't have a Renaissance, a rebirth, without a death. The current standard of our civilization as we know it must die before it changes. As long as we allow the puppets of the legislators to kill us with impunity we can't win. For every person that the pigs take, we must take two of theirs. A civil war is scary. But no real, long term change will happen without it.

People speak as if incarcerating these murderous pigs brings justice to the fallen. These victims are still dead. Their families still have to endure the pain of losing someone that they love. They will keep dying until the murderers have a real consequence to their actions. You think Chauvin has it rough? At least he's alive. I know a cop will be far more hesitant to pull the trigger if it could mean *their* life rather than the person they are gunning down.

A lot of people try to make this nation "evolve" into something greater. I feel that this mindset is faulty. When weeds appear in gardens, they aren't

on 7-4-1776 by a bunch of slave-holding europeans. So this constitution wasn't created with people of color in mind, it was a constitution that was created to protect white people, it is a constitution that only considers people of color a fraction of a person. So why are black and brown people living by a constitution that doesn't even consider them a whole person?

Now everyone is trying to figure out why the world is the way it is for people of color today. What if we do away with the government as a whole, how would you survive in this world? Would your family and loved ones survive in this world? If you are reading this and thinking that I am tripping, just sit back and think about ordinary citizens such as your family and friends, could they survive in this world? I know me and mine could survive without a doubt, could yours?

I hate all forms of authority, so please don't confuse or take what I am saying as me defending the government, cause I'm not. What are you willing to do, and what skills would you need to do it? I'm just being honest...

- Kev

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NOTHING CHANGES BUT THE FACES



A few years ago while reading the Delaware News Journal, an article highlighting the commemoration of a park named in Joe Biden's honor caught my attention. For me, the picture attached provided more insight into the occasion than the article itself. The park, formally known as "Price's," is located in the inner city of Wilmington, Delaware. A jovial Biden was surrounded by a crowd of black youth and their guardians (predominantly women). All in attendance seemed to be enjoying the celebration.

While slowly shaking my head, a smirk crept across my face as I thought about the irony of this visual. As my eyes scanned the photo, I couldn't help but wonder how many of their grandfathers, fathers, uncles, brothers, and sons I've encountered throughout my incarceration, who were "institutionally exiled" by the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (aka the Tough on Crime bill). According to Michelle Alexander, author of *The New Jim Crow*, "Once elected, President Clinton endorsed the idea of a federal 'three strikes and you're out' law...The $30 billion crime bill sent to Clinton in August 1994 was

hailed as a victory for the Democrats, who 'were able to wrest the crime issue from the Republicans and make it their own.' The bill created dozens of new federal capital crimes, mandated life sentences for some three-time offenders, and authorized more than $16 billion for state prison grants and expansion of state and local police forces. Far from resisting the emergence of the new caste system, Clinton escalated the drug war beyond what conservatives imagined possible a decade earlier. As the Justice Policy Institution has observed, 'The Clinton administration's "Tough on Crime" policies resulted in the highest increase in federal and state inmates of any president in American history.'" Back then, Senator Joe Biden was one of the bill's biggest advocates.

How would those kids feel after one day discovering they embraced a figure who was a catalyst in rupturing their families and communities? Would their perceptions shift if they knew he's now the premier representation of a system whose evolution is predicated on its resistance to their existence? During one of Biden's presidential debates, he offered an apology and acknowledged that supporting the bill was a mistake. Being though his "apology" can't be objectively measured or quantified, it holds no weight! Biden's atonement must be translated through decarceration, and "Get Tough" initiatives against law enforcement, lawyers, prosecutors, judges and others who're granted a "privileged immunity" when found in violation of constitutional laws. Hundreds of thousands of cases get appealed, overturned, or dismissed for blatant miscarriages of these constitutional amendments:

> 4th Amendment = The right of the people to be sure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall

QUESTIONS FOR ABOLITIONISTS



I hear people say they would want a world without the government. I'm one of those people that would like to see a world without the government and the police. But the majority of these people aren't being honest with themselves and aren't looking at the whole picture.

Just ask yourself: could an ordinary citizen survive in a world without them? I believe that people who have experienced hardship in their lives, grew up in the streets with nothing, could survive in a world without them, because they already lived and survived in a world with them. But people that have never experienced any form of hardship would be victims in this type of world. What is the solution for the individuals who rape and molest women and children, how would they be handled in this world? Are people prepared to personally deal with these individuals through physical violence?

As for doing away with the government, my solution to that is, we as people should create a whole new set of agreements. One that represents this day and age. We are currently living by a constitution that was created

mic is stuck in their face. Without us there is no them, but without them there will always be an us. We are not on mics because we are done talking, there is no compromise, it's all or nothing and it means nothing if we don't get it all!

\- Beans

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issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and the persons or things to be seized.

6th Amendment = In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall! have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusations; To be confronted with the witness against him; To have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have assistance of counsel for his defence.

8th Amendment = Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishment inflicted.

14th Amendment = (section 1) All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the state wherein they reside. No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any state deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law.

Their qualified and privileged immunities are safeguarded within the 11th Amendment = The Judicial Power of the United States shall not be construed to extend to any suit in law or equity, commenced or prosecuted against one of the United States by Citizens of another state, or by Citizens or Subjects of any Foreign State.

This is one of the rudimentary factors buttressing "systemic racism." As it stands, there's nothing deterring these Judicial Powers from using their

occupations to express bigotry, ignorance, supremacism and racism. Until they as "individuals" instead of "entities" are held liable for their transgressions against the people, we'll forever remain subjects in a system decaying from a deprivation of integrity, which directly contributes to the desecration of humanity.

Sharing these thoughts has compelled me to reflect upon my own youth. I don't really recall politicians stepping inside the recreation center, but I remember groups of us being transported to their charity events, fundraisers, PR stunts. In hindsight, I believe our presence (exploitation) was for the sole purpose of being a backdrop for their photo ops, and subsequently becoming an image that perpetuates the "illusion." 30 years ago there probably was a prisoner reading the newspaper and seen my then 9-year-old self in one of those pictures. I imagine him slowly shaking his head as a smirk crept across his face....

Power is the People!

\- BIM

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FOR THE ACTIVISTS



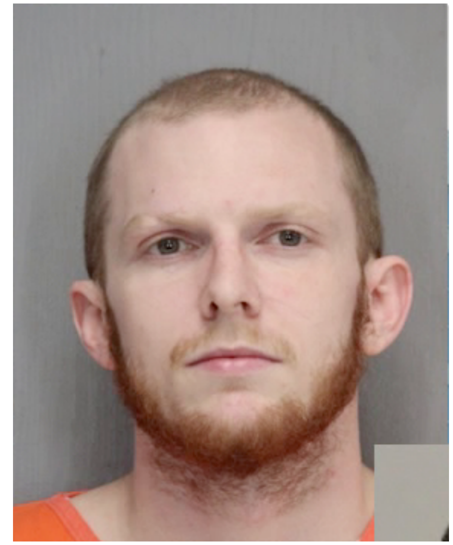
I am not here to talk about my struggles as a person incarcerated; just know this, if you are not struggling you are not fighting. I am here to talk about a more pressing issue that is hard to watch and even harder to understand. Why are symbolic activists feeling so damn self-righteous and entitled? We are not fighting for the same thing. They are fighting to fit in and people like us who take the risk and make the sacrifices are fighting to put an end to all these oppressive institutions. Our leader isn't a person, it's the desire for meaningful, longstanding change. Who gave them the authority to tell us how we should or shouldn't go about getting results! We have been at war and they are and forever will remain in peroration. This isn't a codependent relationship, we don't need symbolic support nor lip service because we are not looking for an off-ramp or compromise. We seek nothing less than complete liberation of self and the demise of these institutions and those who uphold them. If you oppose us, our efforts or the way we come about results, you are a part of the opposition. I often question if they understand who built and gave them their platform; well if they don't, it's the same people who they condemn in order to suck up to their oppressors every time a camera flashes or a

them. But until the collective figures out a way, continue to stand strong and educate yourselves. Until next time!!!

- Johnny

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SOMETHING HAS TO GIVE



As I write this it's the 2020 election year, and it's been by far the most hectic I've ever witnessed. Whether it's Trump tweeting or inciting an insurrection, covid-19, or a cop killing another unarmed Black person, 2020 has continued to highlight the double standards of this system and showed us the many reasons why it has to go. You've literally got people from every walk of life marching together through the streets begging for change.

Like everyone else out there taking a stand, I too want change. I just don't understand what voting has to do with getting that change. How is a different president going to stop cops from murdering people or give true equality to all? I mean we live in a capitalist state that literally needs an oppressed community in order to flourish. Now that question may sound as if I was content with Trump being in office and that couldn't be further from the truth. I'm just trying to point out that regardless of who's in office, the system is going to do exactly what it was designed to do.

See, that's one of the harsh realities people refuse to accept. Whether we like it or not, this system we live in isn't broken. No, it's actually perfect in the eyes of its creators. The same ones who are almost always idolized by the people we're expected to vote for.

Although certain things have changed over time on paper, we have to understand that those so-called changes are done just to save face. For every one law or bill passed in the right direction, there's ten others passed to rectify and undermine that one positive change. Ask yourself, why are people still fighting for the same things they were 60-70 years ago? The same things that were supposed to have changed then.

Whether it's voting, education, desegregation, or everything else that people have fought and died for, those changes only happened on paper. You see, even though everyone has the right to vote, there are laws that were designed specifically to target a certain kind of US citizen that once convicted would prevent those citizens from voting and nothing really changes.

Then there's racial segregation. Even though they say this is illegal, is it? Think about it, whether it's geographically, economically, or institutionally, the oppressors have made the lines abundantly clear. But why? I mean the lines are undeniable, we can't honestly believe it's a coincidence. No, it's intentional and our prison system actually breeds it and the department of justice is actually structured around it. They literally house and prosecute people according to race. Everything about the DOJ and DOC is based off of it. Finally white America is starting to acknowledge that this is a fact and that systemic racism is real. It's been all over the place about police reform due to all the videos that have surfaced of police brutality and cops murdering people. You know I find it extremely funny that all the "important people" act shocked at what the videos show, as if they were unaware of what's been happening, considering they've been working side by side together with these people for years. But only due to the footage do they acknowledge wrongdoing.

I bring this up because I'd like to use it as an example of what happens in our prison systems. You see it's only because of the video footage that surfaced that the pigs' actions are brought into question. Right? Cause let's be honest, without it all these beatings and murders are completely "justified" because no one's going to challenge the cops. Whatever they say happened is what happened.

It's the same but ten times worse in prison. The pigs do what they want when they want without any form of consequences or repercussions for their actions. There isn't anyone in here to video or question their actions, and even if there were, the "important people" at the top were once at the bottom, so the odds are they've either done it themselves or are OK with whatever action is in question. Prisons were designed in order not only to isolate us, but also to hide what happens to us in here. The lack of public oversight is not an accident that can be corrected, but an intentional part of what prisons are for. Basically they've got a pass to do whatever they want. They justify their sadistic torture tactics with the above reality. Simply because they know they can get away with it. But it's us, the prisoners, that are labeled monsters and savages.

It's because of this that these institutions have to be destroyed. What I'm trying to say is that the system that governs us was designed not to fail. It has a way of correcting itself when something is altered that is counterproductive to its survival. With that said, we are fighting against something that has absolutely no desire to lose, and expected to use the weapons it allows us to use. Something has to give, because the real monsters aren't going to provide us with the necessary tools to destroy